

STATE SENATOR • DEBORAH CHERRY • 26TH DISTRICT

Cherry Press Release

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CHERRY ANNOUNCES PRICE GOUGING PROTECTION BILL

LANSING—Proactively fighting to protect consumer rights and prevent Michigan citizens from undue hardship in times of crisis, Sen. Deb Cherry (D-Burton) today announced a bill to prohibit price gouging and unfair trade practices during a state of emergency. The bill would amend the Michigan Consumer Protection Act.

“Hurricane Katrina has made us more aware of the need for emergency preparation at all levels of government. This bill will give us one more guarantee that we will be able to acquire the necessary goods and services should the unthinkable happen,” said Sen. Cherry.

The incidence of gas price gouging complaints has increased dramatically since energy prices rose in response to decreased oil supply from the Gulf Coast Region. Last week, Governor Granholm set aside an extra \$1.3 million for additional gas inspectors to ensure that Michigan consumers are not tricked into paying more than a reasonable price. Sen. Cherry’s bill would strengthen price-gouging regulation for all necessary commodities during an emergency.

“Gas is an essential commodity, especially in a time of crisis. As we saw in New Orleans, an extra \$5 here or there can prevent a family from being able to travel to safe shelter,” explained Cherry. “It is our moral obligation to protect these citizens.”

In April, Senate Democrats announced their “Consumer Rights” Agenda. They rolled out a comprehensive bill package that includes provisions that would, through the use of fines and criminal charges, hold credit companies accountable for debt relief promises, encourage more consumer notification and identity theft prevention, force energy companies to clearly explain charges, and make insurance companies pay for injuries resulting from unfair trade practices.

“Businesses behaving responsibly will not be affected, but we need to ensure that we give our families the tools to remain safe in a time of crisis,” states Cherry.

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Sen. Deborah Cherry is a first-term Democrat from Burton, Michigan. She serves on the Senate Appropriations Committee, where she sits on the Higher Education, Department of Community Health, Department of Natural Resources and Capital Outlay subcommittees